



Childhood Connections

April 2, 2024

Roads to Success

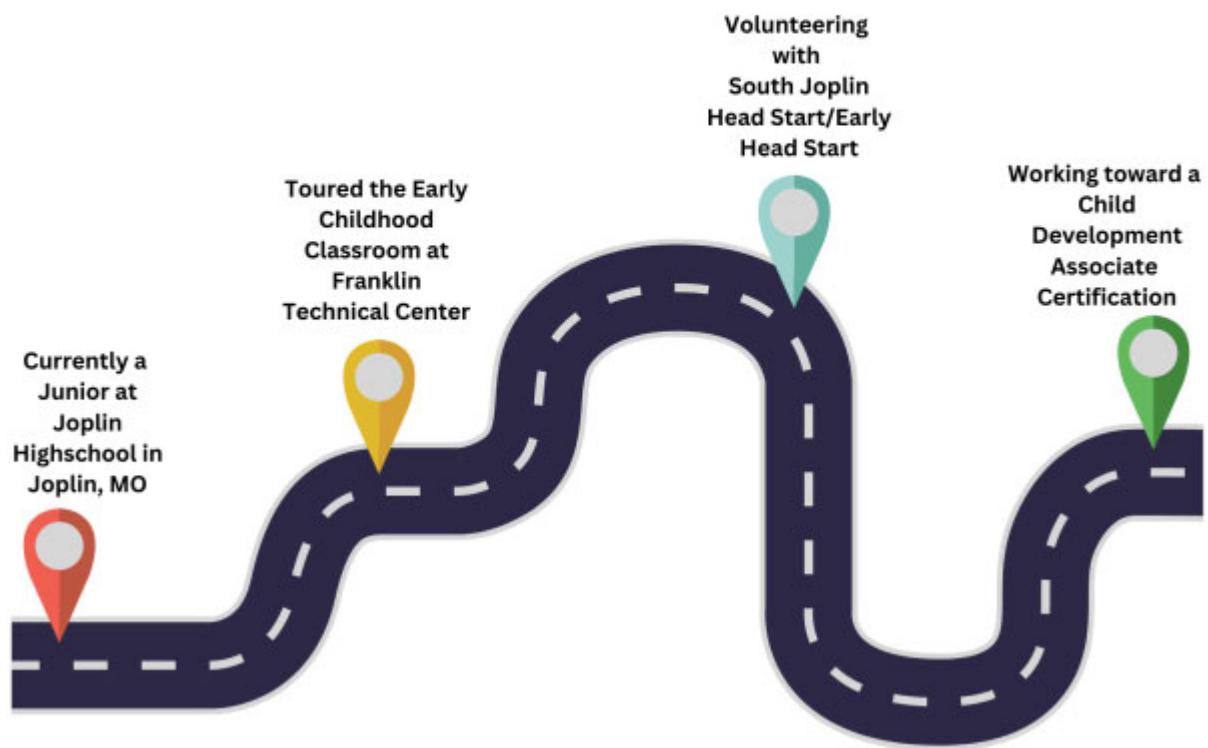
Throughout 2024, the Office of Childhood (OOC) will share “Roads to Success,” a collection of stories from professionals and higher education institutions. Stories from professionals feature achievements from people working in childhood programs such as home visiting, early intervention, child care, Head Start, preschool, and afterschool. Stories from higher education institutions highlight colleges and universities who are using innovative methods to support and grow the early childhood workforce. There are many roads to success, it is important to highlight the varying and unique pathways that professionals take and how higher education programs can pave the way. These stories are also available at the bottom of the [Early Connections website](#).



This month’s Road to Success story features Elijah Chauncey, a current junior at Joplin High School in Joplin. Elijah is working towards his Child Development Associate (CDA) certification to jumpstart his career by taking early childhood courses at Franklin Technical Center (FTC). Elijah will graduate from high school in 2025 and obtain his CDA once he turns 18. Elijah said he first became interested in the CDA during his sophomore year of high school when he toured the early childhood classroom at FTC. Elijah shared, “something about being in that room spoke to me and I felt very inspired; I just wanted to join the program.”

Elijah spoke about his current coursework centering around storytelling and utilizing books in the classroom. He has enjoyed the opportunity his early childhood courses give him to begin preparing his portfolio - a certification requirement for the CDA. Elijah is currently volunteering in the South Joplin Head Start/Early Head Start in conjunction with his high school courses. He said a pivotal point for him was when he first began visiting the classroom and met a student who was struggling. Elijah said he bonded with the student and that his passion for early childhood ignited through watching the student flourish. He aspires to "help raise the next generation of great people." He advises anyone going into the field to, "go into it for the right reasons and have your heart in the right place."

Here is what Elijah's road to success looks like!



RECAP! 51st Conference on the Young Years



News & Updates

REMINDER! Early Childhood State Advisory Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Early Childhood State Advisory Council (ECSAC) will be held virtually on **Monday**,



In March, DESE hosted the 51st Annual Conference on the Young Years (CYY). Every year this event brings together hundreds of professionals from Missouri and around the nation. At this year's conference there were attendees from 13 other states!

This year's event had 1,828 total registrations and 139 presenters. There were over 600 child care providers, 600 teachers and administrators, and 300 home visitors attending the event, and more than 1,000 attendees at the annual "bash" hosted by the Missouri Association for the Education of Young Children (MOAEYC).

Save the Date! Make plans now to attend the 2025 Conference on the Young Years on March 6-8, 2025.

Call for proposals for the 2025 Conference on the Young Years will be issued in May 2024.

NEW! Children's Trust Fund Seeking Home Visiting Agencies for Incentive Funding Opportunity

The Missouri Children's Trust Fund (CTF) is seeking Home Visiting Agencies (HVAs) who are interested in participating in a statewide home visiting outcomes rate card (ORC) that provides incentive funding to high performing HVAs who are providing year-round services to low-income Missouri families.

CTF developed [an application form](#) to be completed and submitted to ctf@oa.mo.gov no later than midnight on **April 15, 2024**, in order to be eligible for Fiscal Year 2025 ORC participation. HVAs will be

April 15, 2024, at 12:30 p.m.

The agenda is posted on the [ECSAC meeting webpage](#) and other presentation materials will be posted approximately one week before the meeting.

NEW! 2024 Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Final Rule

On February 29, 2024, the Administration for Children & Families (ACF) announced the CCDF Final Rule that updates regulations (45 CF Part 98) to support child care quality and accessibility in communities. Policies are designed to lower child care costs for families, improve payments to child care providers, make enrollment easier and faster for families, etc.

This [Fact Sheet](#) highlights the key changes in the rule.

An overview of this final rule and its impact on child care in Missouri will be part of the ECSAC meeting on April 15, 2024

NEW! Preschool Start-Up Grants

A [Preschool Start-up Grant Administrative Memo](#) was recently disseminated to all local education agencies to announce a new funding

contacted by April 30, 2024, to begin the contracting process.

NEW! Missouri Statewide Parent Involvement Network (MoSPIN)

Missouri Statewide Parent Involvement Network (MoSPIN) is a free homebased program for families of children, birth through 5 years, who are visually impaired, including those with multiple disabilities and combined vision and hearing challenges.

MoSPIN provides:

- Home visits by parent advisors where parents select one- or two-hour visits, not to exceed four hours per month
- A focus on parents as their child's first and most important teacher
- Information to help parents understand their child's visual diagnosis and learning characteristics
- Parent lessons on vision, communication, motor, hearing or cognition from the national INSITE curriculum
- Ongoing support and provision of resources to families

For additional information regarding the MoSPIN program or activities relating to families of children with combined vision and hearing loss, contact:

Melissa Moore, MoSPIN Coordinator and Lead Parent Advisor
Missouri School for the Blind
3815 Magnolia Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63110
314-633-1591 or
Melissa.Moore@msb.dese.mo.go

New! Conscious Discipline & Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) Training Opportunities

Several new training dates have been added for Conscious Discipline trainings, developmental screening training, and Second Steps training. Check out these training flyers for more details and registration information:

1. [Conscious Discipline](#) (open to all child care providers)
2. [Conscious Discipline for Home Visitors](#)
3. [Ages & Stages:3 and Ages & Stages:SE2 Questionnaire](#)

opportunity for preschool programs.

The application closes on **June 30, 2024**, at 11:59 p.m.

NEW! Afterschool Grant

The Afterschool Program has a competitive grant for school age afterschool programs that is now open: the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) grant. Awards are subject to availability of funding.

[Visit the Afterschool grant webpage for more information.](#)

UPDATE! KEA for Public Schools

An [Administrative Memo](#) was disseminated to all school administrators to announce details about KEA activities for school year 2024-25, including steps to register kindergarten teachers for training and other resources.

The [Kindergarten Entry Assessment \(KEA\) webpage](#) has state-level data results from the KOF in 2021, 2022, and 2023 (under the Required Reporting tab) and information on the differences between screening and assessment (under the

4. Second Step

NEW! Show-Me Head Start ECHO

To support Head Start professionals, the Show-Me Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) brings together Head Start workers to share and discuss cases. Head Start ECHO is also a place where individuals can find comradery and expert advice on some of the most unique challenges. Collaboration is valuable and anyone working in a role related to Head Start services should know, with ECHO, they are not alone! ECHO can help support, expand, and strengthen your incredible community efforts! Learn more about Head Start ECHO [in this informational flyer](#).

Register for this FREE learning collaborative at the Head Start ECHO, every 3rd Wednesday of the month from 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. by visiting showmeecho.org.

NEW! Missouri First Steps - Annual Application for Federal Funds

All states submitting an application for federal funds under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are required to make the application for funds available for public review and comment. IDEA Part C funds support the First Steps Early Intervention Program for children, birth to 3 years, and their families.

The OOC has developed a draft application for the funds.

For more information on the draft FFY 2024 application and public comment period, visit [the Draft FFY24 Part C Application webpage](#).

REMINDER! Enhancement Grants

A relief grant is available to child care providers in Missouri:

- Enhancement grants support child care programs. [Apply here!](#) Application closes May 31, 2024.

Contact ChildCareRelief@dese.mo.gov or call 573-415-8951, extension 1, if you have questions about

Screening versus KEA tab).

REMINDER! April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is nationally recognized as Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Friday, April 5, 2024, is Go Blue Day. Wear your favorite blue in honor of your commitment to preventing child abuse.

Post to social media with the hashtag [#EveryChildNeedsAHero](#)

Help prevent child abuse by downloading and sharing the [Child Abuse Prevention Month Toolkit](#) with your community.

NEW! Maternal Health Access Program

Maternal Health Access Program (MHAP) is a statewide perinatal psychiatry access program designed to give health care providers the resources they need to confidently identify and manage their patients' perinatal mental and behavioral health conditions.

Any provider in the state treating patients during pregnancy or in the 12 months following delivery can register for services using [MHAP Provider Registration Form](#).

NEW! Parent Advisors Needed

your application or payment.

NEW! DHSS Seeks Organizations to Help Provide Summer Meals to Children

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) is looking for non-profit organizations throughout the state to help increase access to food for thousands of children over the summer months while school is not in session, when children often do not have access to free or reduced-price meals at school. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) reimburses organizations for meals they serve to children under the age of 18 years who are at risk of not having enough to eat during the summer months.

DHSS will accept applications from new non-profit organizations **March 1 through May 15** to participate in the program. Organizations interested in serving nutritious meals to children through the summer are requested to apply. Training in the requirements for the program will be provided. More information about the SFSP is available online at the [Summer Food Service Program webpage](#).

Organizations eligible to participate in the program as sponsors include non-profit organizations such as schools, faith-based organizations, camps, private nonprofit agencies, and local government entities. Sites qualify if they are located in areas of Missouri where at least half of the children are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals.

NEW! MOPD System Updated Instructions

OOC released updated written instructions for the MO Professional Development (PD) System. Check out [the updated MOPD written instructions](#).

Tip! Use the search bar or click on a topic in the table of contents of the written instructions to jump to the topic you are interested in.

Updated instructions include these topics in the Table of Contents:

- Employment (page 21)
- Individual Reports (page 47)
- Taking an E-Learning Course (page 54)
- How to Run Reports – For Directors, Owners, and Others with Organization Administrative Access (page 98)

The DESE Families First Program is seeking professionals statewide to provide early intervention services to families and their children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in natural environment settings. Parent Advisors work on a part-time, as-needed basis with flexible hours.

Requirements: At least a bachelor's degree in one of the following areas: deaf education, speech and language, audiology, deaf studies related professions, or early childhood special education.

For more information, please send email with your request to FF@msd.dese.mo.gov.

REMINDER! Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is available in every zip code in Missouri. Children birth to age 5 years can be registered by their parent or guardian to receive one free book per month.

There is no cost to families and there is no limit on how many children in Missouri can sign up.

Parents can visit the [Imagination Library](#), under "Check

Also, a new graphic on [this webpage](#) outlines the required steps for users in MOPD.

NEW! OOC Home Visiting Flyer

OOC offers services to families and children through a variety of home visiting options to meet the specific needs of families. These programs can support families from pregnancy until the child enters kindergarten.

[This home visiting flyer](#) highlights program eligibility, along with data that include the number of families and children served, the population of families served, the number of children who received a developmental screening, and the percentage of children screened with an indicated developmental delay.

RESOURCE! Missouri School for the Deaf - Families First Program

The Families First Program provides home-based early intervention services throughout Missouri at no cost to families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing from birth through 8 years.

Eligibility for the Families First Program is based on a current Deaf or Hard of Hearing diagnosis by a licensed audiologist, which includes an audiogram and evaluation report current within a year.

Each family is paired with a SKI-HI certified Parent Advisor who typically will meet with them in their home or other natural environments for one hour per week. Visits are family oriented and individualized with the focus on the family and their child learning new skills through natural environments and routines.

Please visit the [Missouri School for the Deaf early intervention webpage](#) or call the Resource Center at 573-592-2543 or 573-592-2572 for further information.

REMINDER! Week of the Young Child April 6-12, 2024

Availability", to complete the registration form

RESOURCE! Missouri Parents as Teachers Association

MOPATA is a non-profit organization that provides skill-building, peer learning, networking, and advocacy for access to PAT programs for all families.

Visit the [MOPATA webpage](#) to access training and collaborative sessions.

UPDATE! The Safe Cribs for MO Program has Expanded

The Safe Cribs for Missouri Program provides safe cribs and sleep education to low-income families in Missouri.

The program is now serving 80 counties in Missouri, with services now available in Chariton County.

Partnering with Missouri's Parent Education Program, the Safe Sleep program has distributed over 200 cribs for Fiscal Year 2024, helping babies reach their first birthday.

For more information on the Safe Cribs for Missouri program, including a program map of all counties served, [visit the Safe](#)



Celebrate and shine a light on children and early learning April 6th to 12th with creative and collaborative activities.

For a list of themed activities for young children, from Music Monday to Family Friday, visit [the Week of the Young Child Themed Days on the Early Connections](#).

REMINDER! Background Checks: Myth vs Fact

Myth: DESE requires child care providers to have a background check on file before a First Steps early intervention provider can deliver services to a child at a child care program.

Fact: Per 210.1080, RSMo, child care staff members and volunteers are required to have a background check completed prior to providing child care. First Steps providers are not considered child care staff members. All First Steps providers undergo a comprehensive background check prior to being enrolled and providing services. All First Steps providers must also complete an annual Family Care Safety Registry screening.

Therefore, DESE does not require a background check to be on file at the child care program in order for First Steps providers to deliver services at a child care program.

Learn more about child care requirements on the [Child Care Background Check Process webpage](#).

REMINDER! Child Care Data System (CCDS): Parent Information

OOC continues to email and mail information to parents on a regular basis to help inform them how to set up an account in CCDS. You can help us by sharing this information with families in your community:

- **Log into the System – Existing Families.** For families in child care who were receiving subsidy in December 2023 or earlier, [this flyer](#)

Cribs for Missouri webpage.

REMINDER! Licensed and License-Exempt Providers

To ensure proper documentation of information received from child care providers, OOC staff date stamp documents received with the date the documents arrive in the office. Note that this may be a different date than the date a document was signed.

To see the dates OOC received required documents, child care providers can review the second page of inspection reports.

REMINDER! MO-SECA

Missouri Supporting Early Childhood Administrators (MO-SECA) provides early childhood administrators across the state with the knowledge, skills, and connections they need to effectively lead and operate sustainable, quality programs.

Sign up to attend a Business Academy and/or Leadership Academy near you and early clock hour credit while improving your management and leadership skills.

Find out more information [visit the MO-SECA webpage](#).

for Existing Families can help them connect to their historical information in CCDS.

- **Log into the System – New Families.** For families in child care who applied and were determined eligible for child care subsidies after January 1, 2024, [this flyer for New Families](#) can help them create a new account in CCDS.
- **Select your Provider in the System.** Once the parent has created an account in the new system and identified their child care provider, the parent selects that provider in the system using this flyer for [Selecting or Changing Your Child Care Provider](#). The provider must be selected in the system before the provider can be authorized and paid for child care services.

Questions? Contact the child care call center at 573-415-8605.

Representatives are available:

Monday-Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday 8:00 a.m. to noon.

REMINDER! Office of Childhood Contact Information

OOC publishes a printable [Contact Us](#) document that includes the current phone numbers and email addresses for every program administered by OOC.

There is also an accompanying [What We Do](#) webpage that lists the current section and team leaders for each OOC program.

Spotlight on Success

Spotlight on Success aims to share stories from local programs that are building community partnerships in order to strengthen and coordinate childhood programs.



Photo Courtesy of Melanie Stoelting

The Dexter R-XI School District's Parent Education Program has been partnering with Dexter Regional Healthcare Foundation for five years. This is a partnership that developed based on a pilot of home visitors across the state and has continued providing parent education through the Bootheel Babies program and Mother-to-Mother. The partnership is exemplified by a recent story from Melanie Stoelting from Dexter Parent Education Program.

Melanie recently received a phone call from the Safe Babies program in another state about a 6-month-old baby under their service. Soon, the baby will be moving to the Dexter area to be in the care of a family member. The Safe Babies representative found parent education information on the Regional HealthCare Foundation webpage through their partnership. After talking with them about how parent education support is offered, she also suggested they reach out to the Parentlink representative for the Dexter area to provide kinship services.

Recently when Melanie checked in with the Parentlink representative, she learned that they had in fact had an email from Safe Babies and were happy to provide the family with support as they cared for this baby while working with their parent educator. When Melanie spoke with the family in-person about the team support parent educators and Parentlink will be providing, the family member said, "This brings me comfort." Working together, these programs were able to support this family as they enter a new community!

UPDATE! Preschool Development Grant



The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) provides funding over three years to coordinate a more effective, high-quality early childhood system that better prepares Missouri children for success.

Each month, the OOC hosts a live webinar to provide updates and information about the PDG B-5 to stakeholders. A [recording](#) and the [PowerPoint slides](#) from the March 2024 webinar are available in case you were unable to attend and wish to hear the information. You can view archived webinars here:

- [February 2024](#)
- [January 2024](#)
- [November 2023](#)
- [October 2023](#)
- [September 2023](#)
- [August 2023](#)

The [PDG B-5 dashboard](#) is also updated monthly. This dashboard provides an at-a-glance look at priority areas, budget status, and key accomplishments.

PDG B-5 Monthly Webinar

Join us for the next PDG B-5 Stakeholder webinar on **Tuesday, April 30, 2024**, from noon to 12:45 p.m. to learn more and ask questions. You can [access the webinar](#) in a Google Chrome or Safari web browser. Do not view in Internet Explorer. We hope you can participate!

For questions about the stakeholder webinar series, or suggestions for topics in future webinars, email us at Childhood@dese.mo.gov.

Archived Editions of Childhood Connections

Visit the OOC webpage to find previous editions of Childhood Connections.

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